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Philippines: Manila hopes Communist trade threat
will spur US concessions. (Page 8)

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Philippines: Manila hopes the prospect of competitive Communist markets will force further trade benefits from the US.

President Marcos favors lifting a long-standing ban on trade with the bloc, and a bill to this end is pending in Congress.

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Manila also hopes to pressure the US into early discussions on the Laurel-Langley agreement, which governs US-Philippine trade relations until 1974. The panel on Communist trade was in fact comprised of the same Philippine representatives who are on the Laurel-Langley review committee.

Despite Philippine desires to use trade with Communist countries to pry further concessions from the US, the panel's recommendations revealed considerable caution about permitting contacts between Filipino traders and Communist state trading corporations. It suggested that a quasi-public Philippine agency be used to arrange trade deals. Visits to the Philippines by Communist trade representatives would be restricted both in time and number of visitors. Particular care was to be taken to prevent reciprocal visits by Philippine and Chinese Communist traders. Any transactions with Communist China would be handled through Hong Kong.

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